

## [Robt. Lindsey]

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Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 [128?]

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Robt. Lindsey, 65, was born in Louisville, Tex. His father was a cattle dealer, traveling over the cattle country, buying, selling, and trading. When he was four years old, his father took the family with him, this giving Lindsey an opportunity to learn the cattle business. He was able to ride a horse at an early age, and was employed on the Payne Ranch in Denton co. when only 11 Yrs. old. While he was employed on a number of ranches, he was such a roamer that he never stayed in any one place very long at a time. When not employed on a ranch, he was employed in railroad construction, building construction, and other trades until he came to Ft. Worth, Texas, in 1937, and took over the management of the Donna Hotel at 1014 1/2 Main St. His story:

"Well, I wasn't born on the range, but the longest I've ever lived in a town since I was big enough to recollect, is since I came to Fort Worth about three months ago. You see, I was born in Louisville, Texas, on Feb. the 18th, 1872, but my dad moved us out when I was about four years old. We all took to the road with him, and he bought and sold cattle. The way he'd do, was to go to a place, make a deal for so many head to be delivered, go to another and buy the critters with a contract for delivery on the date the first rancher wanted

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the critters. Anyway to make money in cattle without running a ranch, he done it. Anyway except tossing a wet rope. He never slicked a head that he knew of.

“We all traveled around over the country with a chuck wagon and a small remuda of horses, which he also dealt in. Being around hosses all the time, and practically growing up with them, I nacherly undertook to ride as many of 'em as I could, getting to be a fair ride that way. I can't recall the first time I ever rode a hoss, but I don't believe I was much over four at the time. When I got up [?????] 2 to six years old, dad almost turned the remuda over to me. He still kept me off the wild ones he'd annex at times. In fact, I never did get to ride a wild one as long as dad had any say over it.

“Dad had dealings with a lotta ranches, but he dealt with the Payne Ranch in Denton county so much, that I got to know the waddies around it, and when I was 11, they put me on as a reg'lar cow poke. That sure didn't do my ego no harm. I strutted around there fit to kill.

“The Payne Ranch had it's headquarters at Pilot, Knob, and run a 1,000 to 1500 critters. Not such a big place but a waddy had a many head to deal with as if he worked on a big ranch because you can deal with so many at a time anyway.

“There were hosses a-plenty because old man Payne tried to get all the hoss flesh around him he could catch or buy. Why, one time when mules got real cheap, he had over 800 head on the place. You see, if you had a young mule and wanted to sell it, he'd buy it, regardless of the market price and hold it 'til the market suited.

“We trapped every wild hoss that come in that country. Trapped and creased 'em. The creasing business was pretty close going because a six shooter had to be used. The way we'd do, was to have the best shot place shot in the neck muscle, which would numb the hoss long enough to let somebody else tie it up 'til it come to. When, we'd bust that

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hoss right out where we caught him. Well, party bust him, then finish the job at the hoss remuda.

“Any hoss that didn't come up to a good standard, old man Payne sold him off. That way, every waddy had six-eight hosses that really were cow hosses. The reason he wanted the best hoss flesh for his [rannies?] was because he knew that the better a hoss a man had, the 3 better work he was able to do. It took real good hosses to do good work with critters because a hoss had to know how to keep on a cow's trail that a waddy roped and missed while chasing it through a herd. Most of the time, when a waddy rode his hoss into a herd after a certain critter, he never missed his shot, but sometimes the critter would toss it's head just as the waddy made his cast, and the cast would miss. If the hoss was a good cutter, it'd stay on the critters tail as it ran through the here 'til the waddy got into a position to make another cast. Some of the hosses seemed to take great delight in chasing a cow, and wouldn't lose track of it.

“Then, another thing a good cow hoss has to know, is when to set down after the waddy had made a cast out in the open, away from a herd. The main place to rope a running critter was on one of the front legs, then the hoss would sit down, which would throw the cow over on it's side. Then, before the cow could get up and run again, the hoss has to be fast enough to get the cow poke to the cow in time to tie it's other three legs up so it can't get up. When that's done, the cow poke is in a position to brand the critter.

“The branding is done with an iron rod that has the particular brand of that ranch on one end. Usually, the brand is several figures or letters. Sometimes, it's an odd design, but all the brands are registered at the State Capitol, and each brand is different and private. This brand is heated, then placed on the cow to burn the design into the hide in a way that it'd never wear off, and you'd be able to recognize the brand years later, whether the cow was alive, or you just saw the hide alone. Of course, the cow pokes never built a fire every time they caught a cow, unless it was out of roundup season, which is in the spring and Fall. The reg'lar [?] 4 way, was to roundup all the critters on the range twice a year at the times

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I mentioned, and cut out the unbranded ones, brand 'em, then cut out the sale critters that their owner wanted to cash in on. Of course, that'd be the stock in best condition to trail drive.

"The Payne Ranch never trail drove any critters. Instead, old man Payne'd sell to some other cattleman that was driving a herd through. That way, he never had to leave the ranch, and took no losses on going through the Territory.

"While I don't recall any of the men's names that did drive herd through, I recall that we'd have to add some kind of a figure to all those that he bought. A six, or eight, or something.

"When I was 15, I went up into Kansas, and got a job on a railroad construction crew that was building to'ards the Territory. After about six months at that, I quit and come back to Texas, where I got me a job on the old Slaughter Ranch at Ochiltree, Texas.

"The Slaughter Ranch was a big one, having 96 sections in it, and I don't know how many head of cattle. I was teamed up with George Clay, and we run around together when not working. Just to give you an idea about how many cattle there was on that place, George and me spayed 6,000 three year old heifers. That's a many a one. Take it from me, it is! [Another?] thing, if you've never seen a spayed heifer, they're as wild as a deer or an antelope ever got to be. Spaying a heifer is the same as castrating a steer. It makes 'em fat as all get out, and gives 'em more pep.

"A couple of years on the Slaughter Ranch, and I left to go to the oil fields. I had an interesting experience in one of them, 5 where I was in charge of the hosses and mules. A man walked up to a negro cloes to me, and asked for the ram rod. The negro pointed to'ards me, and he asked me for a job as a skinner. I instinctively knew that the man was a nacheral with hosses, so I put him on. And he was a good one too. You know, that fellow and me worked side by side for almost a year before he ever opened up and told me a thing about himself. That's the West for you, you know. We never asked a man about

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anything. If he didn't want to open up of his own accord, we always figured it was his business and we didn't have to truck with him if we didn't want to.

"Well, one day, some how or another, the discussion led to my birthplace and I mentioned that I was in Louisville, Texas. He said, 'I was born in Louisville, and my folks' names was 'Donald'.

"I said, 'Donald!? Why, that's my mother's first name'. He never said another word, nor ever talked about it again. Later on, he opened up and told me he'd been a rustler. He said he'd discovered a pass out of a certain country, and had taken thousands of critters out that pass and sold 'em over in California. You know, I believed every word and suspected more. Another thing about him was, that he never packed a six shooter but I knew he was a crack shot because he jerked mine out one day and disconnected a rattler that was about to strike me. He was so fast that the thing was over before I'd had time to realize what was up. Soon after he used my pistol, he disappeared from camp and I never heard tell of him any more.

"My next job was with Lacy Tully, a cattle dealer that 6 operated out of Denver, Colorado. I was hired to take charge of a train of cattle out of Denver to Alliance, Nevada. A couple of stops South of [alliance?], I'd get hungry and we was at a small stop where I could get a lunch but we didn't have no time. I asked the conductor if we could wait 'til I got a bit, he said, 'Speak to the engineer'. I asked him and he said,

"Yes sir! We're tipping our hats to Tully men! Tully just got a \$40,000.00 judgement against the road for letting a train load freeze'. What they'd done, was to unload a train load of cattle right out into a blizzard when the train was stopped, and the cattle not being used to that kind of weather, froze.

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"After the cattle was turned over to Tully's man in Alliance, I was standing in a saloon and a trampy young fellow walked up to me. Expecting him to put the bum on me, I didn't expect him to say what he did. He said, 'Do you want a job?'

"I thought he said, 'Do you know where I can get a job?', and I said, 'No, I'm looking for a job myself'.

"He said, 'Hell! That's what I ast ya!' That was a hoss of a different color so I took him up. His name was Joy, and he had a small ranch out of Alliance. I reckon he had around 2,100 head in [?] 'JY' brand. I didn't work but a couple of months for him because he was so grouchy and the place was so lonesome. You'd go days and days there without seeing a human, and every hill you topped, you'd see another that was bigger.

"I did take a little of the grouch out of the old man, though. One day, I'd just got up from the breakfast table when his son come a-running in and said, 'Don't go out where pop is because he's mad today, and he might take a notion to kill you!' 7 "Well, not packing a six shooter, I was just a little leary. the only thing I could find that would protect me a little, was an old style hoss collar. I picked that thing up, and peeped out the door. You can imagine my surprise when I saw him down in the hoss lot, a pitch forking the hosses 'til several of them were down. I couldn't stand that so I ran down to him and hollered. 'You stop that!'

"He looked at me and said, 'Alright.' Then, after a bit, he said, 'I thank you for what you just done. I have one of them spells oncet in awhile and I can't help myself.'

"Later on in the day, the boy hunted me up out on the range and said, 'I knew that if anybody could stop him, you could, because he was ranting around like that one time, and a Texas cow puncher like to a beat him to death.'

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"When I decided to ramble on, a couple of months after I joined, I told the kid first. He said, 'Don't tell the old man but just go on because he'll be awful mad, and he might up and kill you.'

"Since that wasn't my way of doing, I went right into the house to tell him. He just took it quiet like, and the old lady with her two girls set up to bawling over it. They wanted me to stay because they was afraid of the old man. He finally said, If you ever want a job, and it's five years from now, or anytime, your old job is open.'

"I went down the road to the Demer Ranch, and old man Demer put me right to work. He was awful inquisitive about what he'd heard me and old man Joy had done, but I told him it wasn't nothing. The Demer Ranch was worse then the Joy place. And cold!, man I've drove a bob sled across the ice with a load of hay for the 8 other side. Where this water come from, I don't know. It rose in the end of a valley between two high hills. Sometimes, the force of the rising water would melt and break several feet of ice.

"One queer thing about the hosses on that place was, that they wouldn't eat hay as long as they could paw through the snow and reack grass. There were a-plenty of 'em too. I heard the old man tell his daughter one time that he'd paid taxes on 400 hosses, and I'll bet there were a thousand of them on the place. He run about 6,000 head of cattle in the bar circle iron. You make it by putting a bar inside a circle.

I guess that was about the finest agriculture land I ever saw, because we put in three crops of alfalfa in four months. Now, that's a-going some when you can do that. The crops was raised under fence in the valleys. Well, a winter and a summer on that place give me enough of the Nevada country so I drifted back to Brown county, Texas, an went to work on a spread owned by a nephew nephew of mine.

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"After about four years, I bought me a pool hall in Brownwood, and quit the ranch. It wasn't so big anyway, and there wasn't enough money for all of us since there were only 1,000 sheep, and a 150 cattle on about 1800 acres of land.

"In a pool hall, you have time to sit around and talk about things. In fact, that's almost all you do when you have one. One of my customers was a W.S. Bill Fossett. Old Bill didn't talk much to anybody, and it took me several years to break him down to talking. I knew that he'd been somebody because you could tell it in his eyes, and his bearing. He'd look at you, and you'd feel like he knew your very thoughts. That caused me to sort of cater to him, 9 and try to win his confidence without ever letting him know I was a-doing it.

"One day, I was talking about the Delton ranches in Palo Pinto county, and a-wondering if they had any connections with the Dalton outlaws. I was talking about Bob Dalton, and asked Bill if he ever heard of him. He said, 'Yes, I knew him well. Truth of it is, I outlawed with him a little'.

"Being a pretty fair hand a poker playing, I didn't let my face tell what I felt, and I just let him talk on. He said, 'I rode 75 miles to identify Bob after a couple of little old marshalls at Chickasha shot him. The way it happened, Bob and a couple other fellows was a-living out in a cabin out of town. They had a woman with 'em, and since they wasn't a-trying to raise nothing, the marshall decided they was bootlegging and went out to see.

"Now, they was a ditch that run for about 300 yards away from the cabin, and when the marshalls showed, Bob run down that to get away. The marshalls saw him, and a lucky shot kilt him. They went on to the cabin and the woman come out a-running and hollering 'Now you've done it! You've kilt my hired man!' You know, them marshalls like to a fought right there, the other two men had got away but they found three or four of those seamless wheat sacks, full of money. Then they like to a been another fight over who shot Bob. Each one claiming he shot Bob so he could collect the reward.' That was when I was a Territory Marshall out of Fort Smith, Arkansas.' 10 "Another story he told me was about



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the first time he went into the Territory as a marshall. I recall that he said it was on one of the first trains to go into the Territory, too. He said, 'I was in one of the coaches, and asleep, when all of a sudden, I heard a lot of shots, and felt the train stopping. I got up and ran to the door, which a few of the others did, the most of them trying to hide. Since the shots were spanging against the side of the coaches, I had room a-plenty to see outside. I saw that a band of six men were going to rob the train. You know, I really don't know what fear really is, and never have. I've just felt like all along that when my ticket was punched, I could be doing anything and I'd go anyway, so I jumped down on the ground, filled my fists, and started to shooting away.'

"The gunmen were on the ground and in plain sight, so I got two of them before the others run. For three-four minutes there, the shots were hitting all around me. The other four men run to their hosses on the other side of the hill, mounted, and rode away with their buddy's hosses. You see what partners they were. Suppose now that one of those that were shot down happened to get a chance to get away. He couldn't get away because hiss hoss was gone, and his partner had took it.'

"They'd drapped a coupla sacks on the ground, and one of 'em had a patch on it that was off of a shirt. I cut that patch out, thinking that it might come in handy some day. About a month later, I was in a cafe, eating breakfast, when four men rode up in a cloud of dust, their hosses all lathered. Well, that was a give away that they were in a hurry to get somewhere. I watched 'em as they eat, and noticed that one of 'em had a shirt just like the patch I was carrying around. I went over to him, matched the patch with a 11 hole in one of 'em's shirt, throwed down on the whole gang, and marched 'em right out to their hosses where I made 'em ride in fron of me to the sheriff's office.'

"Another experience I had was once when I was visiting a friend of mine, that was a sheriff in a Kansas town. I found him in a pool room, and as I stood there talking to him, I watched the operator, and thought he acted suspicious. I said to the sheriff, 'Let's arrest him.'

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“He said, 'No, that's a good man.’”

“We talked it over, and he gave in, arresting the man. On the way to the jail, we passed a drug store and the man asked to go in and get some smoking. Well, since we really didn't have nothing on him, the sheriff let him go but we followed him on in. He went to the end of the counter, and on around behind it. I saw him bend over like he was picking up something, and I jerked my six out. He come out with a box, and had his hand on a '45. I let him get the gun out of the box, then shot his wrist almost in two. He held his wrist and hollered, 'I'd have got both of you if it hadn't of been for that red headed gun slinger there!'. Well, you now, they sent me an invitation to his hanging out in Arizona two months later. He'd been wanted out there for years.'”

“There was one thing that happened to me though, where I really should have lost my life. If it hadn't been for my early training on my dad's ranch in Kansas when Kansas was the wildest place in the world, with a good many desparadoes running around, I'd never have been able to stand up to this experience. My dad had a saying, 'That a man can only die once, and he might's well die a man'. That's the way I felt. This time come about when I decide to visit 12 a friend of mine, that was sheriff in a town after Oklahoma was a State. I'll send you a clipping from the Kansas City Star that tells a heap of it, but I'll tell you right now how I recall it. You know, in fast gun action, with your life in danger every minute, a lot goes on that you just nacherly don't recall.'”

“Well, when I reached the outskirts of this little town, I heard a lot of shooting start. I whipped my hoss up, and saw a gang of men split up, and go in three bunches to'ards some buildings. As I rode in, I saw two or three men on the ground, and I figured it was a holdup. Since I didn't see my friend anywhere, I figured that they'd already got him. I filled boths fist with six shooters, and rode to the center of the town, where I could shoot at all three gangs at the same time when they showed.'”

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“What they was really doing, was robbing three places. Two banks, and a big store. Well, I stood in the middle of the street, and everytime one of 'em showed, I cut down on him. I was so bust that I never noticed what I was doing, but I did feel queer that I hadn't felt a shot yet. They were shooting at me from both ends of the street and the store in the middle. After about 15 minutes, which seemed like a month, the shooting stopped and the rest of the men came out with their hands in the air. When the count was taken, I'd [accouted?] for 13 of 'em. 13 of 'em dead, and me without a scratch. I tell you Bob, I've really got no claim on my life because the law of averages ought to have taken it then.'

“Well, old Bill sent me a clipping with a request to send it back when I was done with it. If you went to prove this, I'd suggest you get in touch with the Kansas City Star in Kansas City. They're bound to have this and you can get the paper's account of it.